



THE ARNEWOOD SCHOOL
11 – 19 Academy

“Working Together, Shaping Tomorrow”

ARN/0005

COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PROFORMA

Subject and Version of Document:	Complaints Policy
Author:	The Head Teacher
Persons/Committees etc consulted whilst document in draft:	Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body
Date agreed:	11.09.17
Date of next review/update and by whom:	Governing Body July 2020
By whom agreed:	Governing Body
Copy obtainable from and/or distribution:	PA to Head Teacher
Date document issued:	11.09.17
Responsibility for dissemination to new staff:	Line Manager
Principal Target Audience:	All staff/Governors/Parents/General Public

Amendments Summary:

Amend. No.	Issued	Page	Subject
1	June 2011	1 and 2	New Front sheet and proforma
1	June 2011	3	Point 3.0 – deletion and insertion
1	June 2011	4	Point 4.0 – insertion 4.2; renumber 4.3 Point 5.1 – deletion of Hampshire Local Education Authority Point 5.2 – deletion of Further details about
2	Nov 2011	1	Point 2.1 – change She to She/He
2	Nov 2011	6	Bullet point 6 – change two working days to five working days
3	July 2014	3 & 6	3.1- delete YPLA replace with EFA; final sentence
4	July 2017	3	2.1 Remove Public Services Officer insert enquiries email address. Remove She/he replace with Our reception staff 3.1 Insert Carer. Remove EFA and replace with CEO of The Gryphon Trust etc

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.0 The Arnewood School has a formal complaints procedure, shown below in stages but recognises that many points can be resolved quickly by informal contact and discussion. **This is a central principle of our desire to have good communication procedures in the school between parents, carers, staff and governors for the wellbeing of our students.**

2.0 **IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT:**

2.1 STAGE 1 - The first point of contact is our email address enquiries@arenwood.hants.sch.uk. Our reception staff can advise parents and members of the general public about the complaints procedure and the relevant member of staff to deal with any enquiry.

2.2 STAGE 2 - The second point of contact would normally be:

- The form tutor, if it is a student matter
- A member of the support staff who deals with the appropriate school matter

2.3 STAGE 3 - The third point of contact would normally be:

- The Head of Year, if it is a student matter
- A senior manager of the support staff who deal with school matters

2.4 STAGE 4 - The fourth point of contact would normally be:

- A member of the leadership team of the school if it is a student or staffing matter
- The Senior Administrator who deals with all aspects of school administration

2.5 STAGE 5 - The fifth point of contact would normally be:

- The Headteacher, who oversees all student matters
- The Headteacher who oversees all staff matters

2.6 STAGE 6 - The sixth point of contact

2.6.1 Adults, at this stage, should refer the matter in writing to the Chairman of Governors, marked for his/her attention and addressed to the school address.

2.6.2 For a complaint about the Headteacher, the point of contact would normally be The Chairman of Governors.

2.7 STAGE 7

2.7.1 If other procedures have been followed without resolution, the matter will be referred to an impartial panel of three or more members of the Governing body of the school. In some circumstances the Chair of the panel reserves the right to hold the meeting in camera. (See Appendix 1)

3.0 APPEALS PROCESS

3.1 If a parent/carer believes that the action of the Headteacher, Chairman of Governors, and panel has been unreasonable, or the correct process has not been adhered to, the recourse is to the CEO of The Gryphon Multi-Academy Trust, Secretary of State for Education, or Education Funding Agency.3.2 Timescale

- 3.2 Matters referred to in stages 1 – 4 should normally be acknowledged within 2 working days, with a full response within 5 working days. Matters referred to in stages 5 and 6 should normally be acknowledged within 5 working days and a full response from Stage 7 from the school, made within 15-20 working days, depending on the individual case and the availability of governors.
- 3.3 The normal timetable for a complaint to be resolved will therefore be no more than 20 working days. Failure to resolve a complaint after 20 days may mean either recourse to a more formal process that may include legal advice or the termination of all reasonable school related procedures
- 3.4 The Appeals process timescale beyond the school is within the provision of a particular department or agency.

4.0 PRINCIPLES OF OUR GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- The focus is on resolution and review rather than blame
- The procedures are accessible to all
- The procedures promote confidentiality and discretion
- The procedures include fair and transparent investigative processes for staff as well as complainants
- Anonymous, malicious, abusive or vexatious* complainants are also dealt with within this procedure. Persistent offenders will be referred to the local police service; in extreme cases, complainants can also be banned from the school site
- Complaints specifically about:
 - The national curriculum and related matters
 - Provision of collective worship and religious educationare covered within the general complaints procedure
- There are specific statutory regulations referring to:
 - Decisions on special educational needs assessment and school placements
 - School admissions and transfers
 - Exclusions
 - Employment

** Vexatious is defined as 'instituted without sufficient grounds, causing only annoyance or embarrassment'*

5.0 DIFFICULT AND ABUSIVE COMPLAINTS

5.1 In the case of any complaints which are: -

- Abusive, vexatious
- Repeatedly and obsessively pursued
- Unreasonable or seeking unrealistic outcomes
- Reasonable but pursued in an unreasonable manner

Governors will decide whether all future contacts should be: -

- Directed to, and only be dealt with by, a named individual
- Restricted, for example to letter only

5.2 If a conclusion has been reached about a complaint but the complainant wishes to continue to pursue it, the school will write: -

- To reiterate that the matter is concluded and there will be no further correspondence
- To give a short response referring to previous documents that have already dealt with the matter
- To say that, if correspondence continues, it will be read and filed but will receive no acknowledgement.

APPENDIX 1

STAGE 7 – Complaints Panel Procedure

- The panel of three or more members of the Governing Body and an Independent Representative will only be convened when all other stages have been completed, including involvement of the Chairman of Governors.
- If a complaint is made to the panel, the complaint should have been first made in writing to the Chairman of Governors. The issues relating to a complaint should be clearly detailed, with an explanation why there is any dissatisfaction with the earlier stages completed of the Complaints Policy.
- Any attempt to write to all Governors is not recommended, since this will make it difficult to set up an independent panel of Governors who have not had prior involvement in the complaint.
- The panel will consist of three or more Governors with no prior involvement in the complaint, an Independent Representative and the Chair of the Panel designated beforehand.
- The Panel’s consideration will be held with a formal agenda.
- In exceptional circumstances, which might include ongoing or potential legal procedures, the Chairman of the Panel – on professional advice - may deem it necessary for the panel to hear the complainant’s case with nobody present beyond the Panel and the Clerk.
- The Clerk to the Complaints Panel, on behalf of the Chairman of the Panel will inform the complainant in writing within five working days of the meeting. The letter will include:
 - A summary of events
 - An outline of the main points of discussion
 - The reason for the decision
 - Proposed action or outcome

For general complaints, this is the final stage of the School’s Complaints procedure.

BEYOND THE SCHOOL

If the complaints procedure of the school has been exhausted, the complainant may wish to have recourse to the Secretary of State for Education or for a school that is an Academy, The Education Funding Agency (EFA).